



TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

March 11, 2022

S.B. 4 An Act Concerning the Clean Air Act

CCM Supports SB 4 with changes.

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members representing 168 towns and cities.

CCM supports the efforts undertaken by the legislature to improve local air quality and expand electric vehicle infrastructure throughout the state. Improved air quality especially within identified environmental justice communities will promote positive health outcomes for local residents and create a greater quality of life.

CCM supports the initiatives within SB 4 to expand municipal electric vehicle (EV) fleets, EV infrastructure and the focus given to promoting the transition from diesel to zero emission buses through the development of grant and loan programs that will incentivize and assist municipalities in converting existing fleets into green fleets.

Towns and cities appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed language included within the bill and looks forward to working with all relevant stakeholders to address a few concerns and work towards passage of comprehensive bill that will benefit all residents.

CCM has concerns with Section 4 which would require that by no later than January 1, 2023 10% of parking spaces for a school building project be equipped with a Level II EV charging station. A school building project under CGS 10-282 "*means (A) the construction, purchase, extension, replacement, renovation or major alteration of a building to be used for public school purposes, including the equipping and furnishing of any such construction, purchase, extension, replacement, renovation or major alteration, the improvement of land therefor, or the improvement of the site of an existing building for public school purposes...*"

The use of "school building project" is overly broad as it would trigger the requirement for 10% of parking spaces to be equipped with Level II EV stations as it appears to apply to not just new school construction but to renovations to existing schools. There is concern with the costs

required to comply with the 10% requirement which may a challenge for many towns and cities to meet. Even if funding is available for the installation of the required charging stations, there will be additional costs associated with site improvements that will need to be made and annual cost required for maintenance and upkeep of these EV stations.

CCM would recommend the committee amend the language to apply this requirement only to new construction projects or renovations that meet a minimum cost threshold and that any costs incurred to meet the 10% threshold be reimbursable through school construction funds.

CCM opposes Section 5 which would mandate another property tax exemption on towns and cities by exempting Level II EV charging stations and refueling equipment for fuel cell vehicles. Municipalities are overly reliant on a regressive property system and additional mandated exemptions to the current 99, simply shifts the burden to residential and commercial tax payers.

CCM would recommend that if the state wishes to encourage the roll out and expansion of EV installations, provide the tax incentives at the state level rather than mandating a local municipality assume the cost. As more electric vehicles come into the market, common sense would indicate that companies will begin to construct the infrastructure to charge these cars and just as we wouldn't exempt a gas station why would we exempt these businesses.

CCM supports Section 11 which would require the DOT to establish and administer a grant program to assist municipalities install public EV charging stations and strongly supports the language in subsection (c) which would create a "rural mobility infrastructure account".

CCM supports Section 12 and 13 which would establish a matching grant program to assist towns and cities modernize existing traffic signals and operations in order to reduce congestion and idling and would be willing to work with the DOT to develop the criteria that would be used to award funding. CCM also supports the language in Section 13 which would authorize the State Bond Commission to issue bonding in order to fund this proposed grant.

CCM has concerns with Section 16 which would require that all school buses in Environmental Justice Communities shall be zero emission by January 1, 2030 and that all school buses be zero emission by 2035. While CCM strongly supports the intention of this program we are unsure whether the timelines established by the bill are achievable. Given the current cost differential between a standard diesel bus and an electric bus is the \$20 million recommended in Section 17 sufficient to meet demand and will there be enough EV buses to meet this requirement. CCM would look forward to working with the committee to ensure that goals set forth in this section are achievable and affordable.

CCM also has concerns with Section 18 regarding the proposed mandates for "regionally significant projects" and the requirement that any net greenhouse emissions be offset by undertaking greenhouse gas mitigation transportation projects. This could be cost prohibitive for municipalities and may discourage needed economic development projects. We appreciate the



language within the section that would allow the Commissioner of DOT to waive these requirements but would seem to invest significant authority in a single individual.

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If you have any questions, please contact Randy Collins, Advocacy Manager of CCM at rcollins@ccm-ct.org or (860) 707-6446.